COATS OF ARMS FOR NORTHERN TERRITORIES

DEPARTMENT OF
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CANADA

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FOR RELEASE

COATS OF ARMS FOR NORTHERN TERRITORIES

The proud emblems of Canadian heraldry reach northward to the shadow of the Pole.

The Arctic narwhal and the Yukon malamute join the lion, the unicorn, and the rest of the colourful company that comprise the Coats of Arms of Canada and the Provinces. The Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory each have their own Coat of Arms.

To design Coats of Arms for such a land as the North - one third of Canada - entailed research into heraldry, into the history of the North itself and the advice of Lieut. Cdr. Alan B. Beddoe, O.B.E., Heraldic Advisor to the Royal Canadian Navy and widely known for his work on Canada's BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE.

The designs were approved by the two Territorial Councils and the Coats of Arms were submitted to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. The College of Heralds, after examining the heraldry, recommended the designs to Her Majesty who fixed the Royal Signature to them.

Both Coats of Arms run true to the traditions of heraldry. They are bold in design and spirited in colour. By symbols they indicate the history of the North, its rivers, the wealth in its earth, the Northwest Passage, the Magnetic Pole.

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The colours of the Yukon Coat of Arms are gold and red. The crest, surmounting the shield, shows a malamute on a mount of snow. In the chief, or upper portion of the shield, is the heraldic symbol representing fur, set in the Cross of St. George. The Yukon's mineral wealth is symbolized by discs of gold set within the mountains (two red pyramids). The Yukon River runs between.

The colours of the Northwest Territories are white and red. On the crest two gold narwhals erect face outwards, guarding a compass rose (the North Magnetic Pole). A wavy blue line crossing the white chief symbolizes the Northwest Passage running through a field of ice. This is not only a geographical description of the High Arctic but a reference to the early history of seafaring which first brought the Territories to the attention of the outside world. Below the chief the red and green field is divided diagonally to symbolize tree-line. One section shows the green Mackenzie Valley, opposite the tundra is represented in vivid red. Billets of gold and the mask of a white fox symbolize minerals and fur, important bases of northern wealth.

Choice of a pair of Arctic whales for the crest of the Northwest Territories goes far back into the story of the North. The narwhal's connection with history is impeccable; its tenancy of Arctic seas centuries old. In the days of Queen Elizabeth the First the structure of its single spiral tusk earned it the name of "sea unicorne". An account of Sir Martin Frobisher's second northwestern voyage

records the discovery of a dead narwhal in Frobisher Bay in August 1571. "On the west shoare," the chronicler wrote, "we found a dead fishe floating whiche had in his nose a horn straight and torquet (twisted) of lengthe two yardes lacking two inches....."

Like the hardy malamute, the narwhal has earned its place of honour on the Arms of the North.

Here are the descriptions as they appear on the shields:-

Armorial Bearings of the Yukon Territory

Arms:- Azure on a Pallet wavy Argent a like Pallet of the field issuant from base two Piles reversed Gules edged also Argent each charged with two Beants in pale on a Chief Argent a Cross Gules surmounted of a Roundel Vair.

Crest:- On a Wreath Or and Gules A Husky Dog standing on a Mount of Snow proper.

Armorial Bearings of the Northwest Territories

Arms:- Per bend wavy Gules and Vert Billety Or in sinister Chief the Mask of an arctic Fox Argent on a Chief indented also Argent a Barrulet wavy Azure.

Crest:- On a Wreath Argent and Gules A compass Rose proper between two Narwhals haurient and addorsed Or.

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